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Maberly, Frederick
Herbert

Proposed mariners' rescue
and national defence...

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Box 21



A MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECT RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
FOR THE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF THE
HOUSES OF LORDS AND COMMONS.

PROPOSED MARINERS' RESCUE
AND
NATIONAL DEFENCE COAST ELECTRIC
WIRE.



PRINTED BY
JAMES TOWNSEND,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET,
EXETER.

Mr. 17-19/6-03
To the Houses of Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

Pardon the liberty of my asking your serious attention to the vast national importance of all the Coastguard Stations, the Lighthouses, and Ship Signal Stations, also as far as may be thought advisable, Lightships being placed in night and day electric connection with each other (either telephonically or telegraphically), and with the general telegraph system; and may I venture to ask your perusal of what I have already addressed to the Queen, and all the Associated Chambers of Commerce on the subject, which I do with less hesitation than I otherwise should, had it not been entirely in consequence of the action I took that the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce put on the programme for the meeting of the Associated Chambers at the Whitehall Rooms in February last, a notice of resolution to press on the Government the necessity for carrying out such an arrangement, when a resolution to that effect was adopted without a dissentient voice, 30 members of parliament attending the meeting as delegates. Neither the Plymouth, Bristol, nor the Exeter Chamber—with each of which I was in correspondence to get such done—had, but for my request, the smallest intention of then bringing the subject before the Associated Chambers, and seeing that there is now a Bill before the House of Lords for empowering Lloyd's Corporation to obtain by compulsion sites for additional Ship Signal Stations, may I be permitted to urge upon you the necessity for carrying out imperially the entire measure.

From copy of Lloyd's Signal Station Tariff, given at pages 24 & 25 (to which I beg to call special attention), it will be seen that at only three of the "Corporation's" Stations is the sea look-out other than from daylight to dusk

and therefore that any increase of stations consequent on the passing of the Bill in question would not make the wires available at additional points for life saving purposes, &c., between the hours of 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., as the wires at any new stations (with perhaps one exception) would not then be in connection with the General Telegraph System, and even if they were, *under the present state of things* for life saving purposes, they would be of little and probably no use as a rule. See page 17, par. 6.

To illustrate this, and show the necessity for the Coast-guard Stations and Lighthouses being placed in night and day electric communication, take the case of the wreck of the *Nordstern*, given at page 22, and suppose both the Start Lighthouse, and the Prawle Point Ship Signal Station to have been electrically connected with Plymouth (the nearest telegraph office always open), neither Plymouth, the Prawle Point Signal Station, nor the Start Lighthouse could have communicated with Salcombe (the nearest Lifeboat Station) till 8 a.m.; and with the Coastguard Station at Prawle, where a Rocket Apparatus is kept, there would have been no communication by wire, whereas had the Start Lighthouse (whence the *Nordstern* was first seen to be on the rocks), the Prawle, and Salcombe Coastguard Stations been connected with Plymouth, a saving of seven or seven-and-a-half hours as regards the Lifeboat, and two hours as regards the Rocket Apparatus would have been effected; and had the *Nordstern* gone ashore in a gale instead of in a fog, the delay that occurred in bringing the Rocket Apparatus to her aid, would have resulted probably in the loss of her entire crew.

The present is a most propitious time for dealing with the matter nationally, for all that is necessary for carrying out the proposal is now (with the exception of the Ship Signal Stations (and such should not, I submit, be increased other than under the crown) practically in the hands of the Government. The Trinity, Irish, and Scotch Lighthouse

Boards, being financially in such a position that the Board of Trade has entire control over their expenditure.

The Postmaster General has a lease of the Lizard Ship Signal Station which gives him full power over it for nearly 34 years to come, excepting any agreement with Lloyd's for working the signals with ships, the tariff for which is practically prohibitive to a large portion of the Mercantile Marine, though the profit to the Corporation from the Station is £2,000 per annum, according to the best estimate I am able to arrive at, while the wires are still worked by the Postmaster General, at a loss of over £100 a year; and what is therefore proposed (it might be done as an experiment) is that the Lizard Ship Signal Station be taken entirely into the hands of the Postmaster General, and that every practicable facility, with a low tariff, should be afforded at it for signalling or telegraphing by all vessels, which would be a great boon to the Mercantile Marine, with a material gain to the Public Revenue, instead of a loss as at present, a matter of considerable convenience to the Naval Authorities under ordinary circumstances, and in case of war a saving of much expense to the Admiralty, as shown at page 21, last par.

Dover, one of the most important Ship Signal Stations, is no doubt also a very paying station to Lloyd's.

The Admiralty has not the free use of Lloyd's Ship Signal Stations, not even of the Lizard (*vide* above reference), as would certainly have been expected under the circumstances just stated, and if "Lloyd's Signal Stations" Bill be passed, may I suggest that a saving clause be inserted that the Crown shall have free use of the signals and wires at all the "corporation's" stations; but it is humbly submitted for consideration whether the powers proposed to be given to Lloyd's by the Bill should not be taken for the Crown, with authority to delegate if necessary, for does it not seem contrary to the spirit of the age to give any society the monopoly

of intelligence as to ships, which the passing of the Bill under existing circumstances would give to Lloyd's? The ostensible reason for the Bill appears to be the difficulty experienced by Lloyd's, in several instances, in obtaining land for sites of Signal Stations and right of wire-way by private negotiation; and with a view to facilitate the obtaining permission for wire-way to carry out the proposed arrangement for placing the Coastguard Stations, etc., in electric communication, may I further submit that it be designated, as suggested at page 17, as such would be an appropriate enduring national recognition of Her Most Gracious Majesty's long reign; and few, it is to be hoped, would be found so unpatriotic as to do other than facilitate the obtaining wire-way for carrying out so humane, loyal, and national a measure.

Since addressing Her Majesty and all the Chambers of Commerce, I have seen the report of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to enquire into the desirability of electrical communication between Light Vessels and out-lying Lighthouses and the shore (Blue Book, C, 5,125, 1887), and find from it that the expense of establishing and maintaining such would be much heavier than I anticipated; but this in no way affects the question of at once placing all the Coastguard Stations (and Lifeboats and Rocket Apparatus Stations, when not in close proximity to a Coastguard Station) into night and day electric communication with each other and with the general telegraph system; as such could, it is estimated, be done for £100,000, as shown at page 19, which at 3 per cent. represents an annual charge on the revenue of £3,000, to which add £2,400 for the maintenance of the new wire necessary, *and the yearly increased charge will be but £5,400*, a large proportion of which, if not the entire amount, would very probably be returned for receipts on the extra telegrams that would be sent. *By such the services costing over £14,000,000 annually would be rendered vastly more efficient.* Surely the old adage

—"It's a pity to spoil the Ship for the saving of a penny-worth of Tar," may be most pertinently quoted here.

The measure should not, I submit, be dealt with as belonging to the Admiralty, the Coastguard Service, the Trinity House, the Board of Trade, or the Post Office, but as a National one, though the control and supervision of the wires should be under the Postmaster General for it to be worked efficiently.

It cannot be too definitely kept in mind that as regards National defence and saving lives from wrecks, &c., that nothing but the bringing all the Coastguard, and all on-shore and some of the off-shore Lighthouses, and some of the Lightships into night and day electric connection with each other can make the measure fully effective, and that there is no chance of giving ships afloat off our coasts a cheap and efficient system of telegraphy but by the wires and Ship Signal Stations being in the hands of the Crown.

From what I have understood, Lloyd's would be willing to give up *all* the Ship Signal Stations to the Postmaster General, if he would undertake to work them.

I may mention that the electric communication proposed would be very valuable to Fishermen, as regards the movement of shoals of fish, &c.; and also that steam-vessels have the power to signal by whistle a message of any length, all that is necessary for this being telegraph experts to send and receive; the semaphore should also be used; there is likewise the buoy canister, in which telegrams can be thrown from a vessel to be picked up by boat, and if all these means of communication with such signal stations as the Lizard and Dover were afforded at a low tariff, the number of telegrams from and to the ocean passenger steamers, if not with other vessels, would increase to a very large extent.

Under the present working of the signals, the evidence taken by the Board of Trade Committee, shows that even the

captains of large steamers cannot inform their wives or families of their arrival, except by previous arrangement with Lloyd's, and then only to the extent that the ship has passed a certain station, *vide* questions 2,938 to 2,940.

I am not able to compute the number of passengers and crews passing the Lizard annually, but it is estimated that 250,000 such, with £35,000,000 of property pass the North Channel and by Tory Island, where there is no doubt a ship signal station ought to be established, and which I feel no doubt would pay if the facilities mentioned for telegraphing were offered.

If all the Coastguard Stations be at once put into connection by wire the full development of the measure might be left for the consideration of the Committee the appointment of which Lord Charles Beresford has given notice of his intention to propose for enquiry on the subject of communication between vessels and the shore, &c.

The Government has been prevailed on to give the residents of the United Kingdom, at a considerable loss to the revenue, a reduced telegraphic tariff, but for the mercantile marine, on which we are so absolutely dependent for our national existence, nothing in the same direction has been done, either as regards convenience, or to render help in time of direst need, therefore on the plea of equity, having regard to the heavy tax, £340,000 annually, paid by the merchant shipping for lights to warn of danger, &c., mercy, patriotism, and even self-interest, may I my Lords and Gentlemen implore your individual and collective attention to the matter, for no gale or prolonged fog occurs on our coasts, but the proposed wires would probably bring help to some poor mariners ready to perish, earlier than is practicable by existing arrangements; and in many cases lives would be saved, where under similar circumstances in the too sad experience of the past they have been lost, for instance from the "Deutschland" (57) and "Indian Chief" (17) off the entrance to the Thames, the "Schiller" (331)

near the Bishop Rock Lighthouse, the "Wasp" (30) on Tory Island, in all 435 which it was demonstrated to the committee appointed by the Board of Trade, might have been rescued had electric communication existed, besides lives from other vessels not named, the actual numbers not being known. Surely it behoves those interested in our shipping, and our National defences (so admittedly defective) not to allow the subject to rest until the measure is carried out in its entirety, and a cheap and efficient system of night and day electric communication is established round our coasts.

Of course this could not be given without considerable additional cost had the staff to be provided, but the country has this already in the Coastguard and Lighthouse Keepers.

The Appendix gives additional facts, &c.

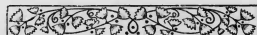
I have the honour to be,

My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most humble and obedient Servant,

FREDK. H. MABERLY.

BATH,
July, 1888.

[COPY.]



PROPOSED COASTGUARD, LIFEBOAT, LIGHTHOUSE,
LIGHTSHIP, AND SHIP SIGNAL STATIONS, ON
AND OFF THE COAST OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM, MARINERS' RESCUE
AND NATIONAL DEFENCE
ELECTRIC WIRE.

*To be discussed at the February, 1888, Meeting of the
Associated Chambers of Commerce.*



[COPY.]

SENT TO EACH { PRESIDENT
VICE-PRESIDENT, } OF THE 65 ASSOCIATED
AND SECRETARY,

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.

SIR,

Some preface is necessary why a stranger takes the liberty, through you, of addressing your Chamber, and as such, permit me to say that when in steamer off the Cornish coast, in July of 1886, I learned that the steamer "Nankin," of 2,400 tons went ashore in a fog, near Coverack, that might have been got off at once, instead of six weeks afterwards preceded by enormous expense, had electric communication existed either with Falmouth or the Lizard. It at once occurred to me that it would be of immense advantage if all our Coast-guard Stations, &c., were connected by wire available by night and day, and in consequence, after conferring with Admirals Phillimore and Grant, and others, in November of that year I brought the matter before the Admiralty and Board of Trade, was again at the Admiralty in February last, in April addressed various Members of Parliament on the subject, and in May forwarded to the Queen a letter, of which copy is annexed, which Her Majesty acknowledged with thanks through Sir Henry Ponsonby. The Queen did not, however, see fit to adopt my suggestion, but having appealed to Her Majesty, it appeared right that her authority for further independent action should be obtained, which

was accordingly done, and I visited Exeter at the Autumn Meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, and saw Sir Burnhard Samuelson, and others, but found as the subject was not on the programme it could not be introduced for discussion, but now, having induced the Plymouth Chamber to get it placed on the programme for the meeting of the Associated Chambers in February, I beg to ask you to be kind enough to bring the matter prominently before the members of your Chamber prior to that meeting, so that your delegates to it may know the views of their Board when the subject is discussed, and in addition I would venture to ask that your Chamber should urge attention to it from the Members of Parliament for your locality.

[COPY.]

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May I venture to approach your most gracious Majesty in regard to a matter of admitted great national importance by all to whom I have personally mentioned it, competent to give an opinion on the subject.

I allude to a proposal that I made in November last to the Admiralty to bring *all* the Coastguard and Lifeboat Stations in the United Kingdom into night and day electric communication with each other, and with the general telegraph system. The lighthouses and Lightships on and off the coasts should also, as far as practicable, be brought into the scheme; but having brought the matter before the Admiralty your Majesty will probably ask why I presume to approach you on the subject and, which I should not venture to do were it not that I fear my feeble efforts will otherwise be unavailing; as the answer of the First Lord of the Admiralty to a question put to him in the House by Colonel Laurie, the M.P. for Bath (with whom I was in correspondence on the subject), as reported in the *Times* of the 6th April, gives me no encouragement that the

proposal will be carried out in its entirety, and I fear not wholly as regards the Coastguard Stations even. Of this however your Majesty will be able to judge, the answer being given as follows:—

"COASTGUARD AND LIFEBOAT STATIONS."

"Lord G. Hamilton, in reply to Colonel Laurie, said,—*"A proposal for placing certain of the Coastguard Stations in closer telegraphic communication with the main telegraphic stations has been receiving the attention of the Admiralty, and is now under consideration. The Admiralty have no jurisdiction over the lighthouses, and vessels on the coast, or over the lifeboats and their arrangements."*

But without further preface I would humbly beg your Majesty to peruse what I venture to submit on the subject, for there is no doubt that were the proposed arrangement carried out many nationally valuable lives would be saved annually that are now lost from the want of it, to obtain immediate help for vessels in distress. In time of war it is impossible to say of what advantage as an auxiliary to our naval defences it might prove.

My proposal was that all the coastguard stations, &c., of the United Kingdom should be embraced in the arrangement, but I have only attempted to estimate the cost so far as relates to England and Wales, in which there are about 470 coastguard stations and detachments (all of which for the purpose in question are treated as stations), and to bring these into night and day communication with each other and into connection with the general telegraph system would probably require about 1,200 additional miles of wire which at the following rate per mile would cost £36,000, namely:—

	£	s.	d.
Wire, 2 cwt., 6lbs. per mile ..	2	8	0
Insulators, 22 at 1/- each ..	1	2	0
22 Poles at 15/- each ..	16	10	0
Labour	5	0	0
Extras	5	0	0
	<u>£30</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

For A. B. C. Instruments and other expenses, say together in round numbers £40,000.

Telegraphic was proposed as the mode of communication from its being less expensive than telephonic, but it may be a question whether the latter should not be adopted, at least in some cases, but this as well as whether a wire should be extended all round the coasts, instead of each station being connected with the nearest telegraphic office, or several stations with each other by direct wire, and only one of them with the nearest existing telegraph office (for which latter plan my estimate was) are matters for enquiry and decision.

The annual maintenance of 1,200 miles of additional wire may be estimated at £1 per mile, or £1,200 a year.

To include the lifeboats and lighthouses on the coasts would involve the laying down of some comparatively small amount of extra wire, but I have no data from which to estimate how much, but the cost of the proposal, though treble the amount named, ought not to stand in the way of its adoption, looking at the enormous national interests that would be beneficially affected.

Our Naval expenditure for the last three years has averaged £12,418,656.

The Coastguard estimates for the year are £445,685.

The National Lifeboat Institution has 290 boats under its charge, the first cost of each of which is estimated at £1,000 for boat, house, and equipment, or a total of £290,000 supported by a voluntary income of over £50,000 per annum.

The tonnage of the Mercantile Marine of the United Kingdom in 10,134 ships of 100 tons and upwards, is 9,410,924 tons, in addition to which there is an immense number of vessels under 100 tons register.

The number of lives lost on the coasts of the United Kingdom annually is said to average 700.

It is supposed that nearly 300 were lost in, or near the Bristol Channel during the gale in December last.

In regard to the value of electric communication for obtaining assistance for vessels in distress, I may say that Mr. Cox, the postmaster of Falmouth, informs me that in 1879 the steamer "Nankin" went ashore near Coverack while he happened to be there, which with telegraph communication might have been got off at once, instead of six weeks afterwards, with the saving of enormous cost. Her tonnage was over 2,400 tons, valued in ballast at £40,000.

He also states that in the same locality the following vessels have gone ashore, namely:—

The "Gipsy," sailing vessel, April, 1886.

The "Port Chalmers," 1,500 tons, March, 1886.

The "Mary West," sailing vessel, January, 1876.

The "Clan Alpine," steamer, February, 1872.

And two or three others on the Manacle Rocks, of which he had not time to ascertain the particulars, all of which had to send either to the Lizard, eight or ten miles by road, to wire, or to Falmouth, 12 miles by road, for help. Some of these might have been saved but for the loss of time in sending by road, and others much helped, had direct communication by wire been available.

All these disasters occurred on three or four miles of coast (*how many then on all our coasts?*) and the value of the vessels would have more than covered the estimated first cost of the arrangement for England and Wales.

The number of lives that it would be the means of saving annually of course I cannot say, but that it would be many there is every probability.

In proof of the need for electric communication between the lifeboats I beg leave to quote from an article in the *Evening Standard* of 13th December last, with reference to the capsizing of the two lifeboats near the Formby Sands.* After comments bearing on the sea-worthiness of the Fleet of Lifeboats, it goes on to say:—"There is however another, and scarcely less important

"point involved, namely the utter want of arrangement and "management shown in the fact that no less than three lifeboats "put out to the assistance of the same vessel, and that each "was ignorant of the other's action. It is indeed the saddest "feature in the catastrophe that these lives were absolutely "thrown away, for the two boats capsized were on their way to "the wreck from which all on board had already been taken "off by the Lytham boat."

"In these days of easy communication, when almost every man "of business in the city has a wire to his manufactory, perhaps "three or four miles away, it seems incredible that these lifeboat "stations so close to each other that a vessel on the Formby Sands "could be seen from each, should yet be without the means of "communication, either by wire or signal with each other, and "that there could be no concerted action, no plan or arrangement."

* 27 of our bravest seamen were drowned.

"Whether this happy-go-lucky state of things is peculiar to these three stations or whether it prevails all round our coasts has yet to be seen."

I may add that so far as I am aware such does prevail.

I have conferred with Admiral Phillimore, the Commander-in-Chief at Devonport; Admiral Grant, C.B., the Admiral Superintendent there; Captain Hotham of the Naval Reserve, and others well fitted by position to give an opinion, and all feel very strongly the necessity for such an arrangement as that proposed.

Captain Lord Charles Beresford, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, whom I have seen on the subject, in writing to me on the 11th February, says:—"Your ideas are in my opinion excellent and sound"—and I know that the proposal has his hearty concurrence.

Baron de Worms, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, on my seeing him expressed himself very warmly as to the necessity for an arrangement of the kind, stating that he had personally witnessed a vessel go to pieces owing to the want of telegraphic communication to ask for help.

Looking at the comparative ease with which those on board vessels at sea along the coasts would be able to put themselves into communication by wire, it might very possibly prove self-supporting as regards expense, for there is no doubt that it might be made the channel of largely increasing the number of Telegrams to and from ships, but the strong basis on which the necessity for the arrangement rests, is the saving of life, and property, and for national defence, though other collateral advantages would also be secured; and knowing the lively interest your Majesty takes in everything affecting the welfare of your people, and the great concern and sympathy that you manifest when any sudden calamity befalls any number of them—the loss of 27 of the crews of the two lifeboats near the Formby Sands to wit, in December last, since my proposal was laid before the Admiralty—may I venture to hope that I shall not incur your Majesty's displeasure in venturing to suggest that a part of the money nationally contributed as an expression of gratitude to Almighty God, for His great mercy and goodness in permitting your Majesty to reign over the Empire for 50 years, may be appropriated to carrying out what I have with the greatest deference dared to bring under your notice; for it is only the first outlay that will prevent the carrying out of the proposed arrangement by the Government, so far as I can judge.

Or should the suggestion not meet with your Majesty's approbation, may I humbly further submit that the matter have your aid in such other way as your Majesty may deem more fitting.

Should, however, the suggestion meet with your Majesty's gracious approval, perhaps the following might not be an inappropriate designation of the scheme:—

"Queen Victoria's Coastguard, Lifeboat, Lightship, Lighthouse, and Ship Signal Stations, Mariners' Rescue, and National Defence Jubilee Wire," or when brevity is necessary,

"QUEEN VICTORIA'S COAST RESCUE AND DEFENCE JUBILEE WIRE."

I am sure your Majesty's sympathetic heart will not fail to appreciate the comfort it would carry to the hearts of your poor fellow creatures clinging as their last hope to a wreck fast breaking up, to know that no loss of time was occurring, in those, in many cases able to rescue them, being made aware of their extremity, when life or death is depending on minutes.

I would just further mention what may possibly not occur to your Majesty, namely that the existing telegraph offices, however near the site of disasters, are not for the most part available between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., being at those hours closed to the public, or if available probably not without considerable delay, and in many cases, under present circumstances, it is not possible to communicate by wire through the night hours, during which disasters at sea to a large extent occur, but by the proposed arrangement all the coastguard, &c., stations would be brought into night and day communication with each other, and with some existing telegraph office always open, which means for all practical purposes for the objects in view with the general telegraph system at all hours.

Since writing the foregoing I have again seen Admiral Phillimore, the Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, and Admiral Grant, C.B., the Admiral Superintendent there, and they both authorize me to say, that in their opinion it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of such an on and off coast arrangement as that proposed, in time of war, or in time of peace, as being among other things, the best safeguard against war.

I am just given to understand that all our Forts are already in electric communication with each other, &c.

Praying in the name of Jesus, that your Majesty may yet be long spared to sit upon the Throne of England, and that a "Queen Victoria's Coast Rescue and Defence Jubilee Wire" may continue a perpetual national memorial of your Majesty's, under God, prolonged beneficent reign.

With deepest respect,

I beg to be permitted the honour to remain

Your most Gracious Majesty's

Most humble and obedient Servant,

(Signed) FREDK. HERBERT MABERLY.

Bath, May, 1887.

P.S.—May I add in case your Majesty should not have read it, an extract from the Annual Report of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for 1886, at page 71:—

"The Institution has now 290 Lifeboats under its charge, every
"one of these has been specially presented to it and they
"save every year hundreds of shipwrecked sailors. Altogether
"the Institution has contributed to the saving of 31,910
"lives. Despite, however, this fleet of 290 Lifeboats, and
"of 30 others locally provided and supported, and despite
"the numerous rocket and mortar stations on our coasts,
"there remains the melancholy fact, that an average of 700
"lives are lost annually on and around our own shores
"alone, proclaiming solemnly, though silently, that for
"humanity's sake, and for the national credit, no exertions
"should be spared in providing means for the conveyance of
"succour to the shipwrecked."

[copy.]

Since addressing the Queen I have also ascertained the number of miles of new wire requisite for connecting the Irish and Scotch Coastguard Stations with their respective nearest existing Telegraph Office. See annexed statement embracing the United Kingdom.

Number of Stations and Detachments.	Country.	Distance from existing Telegraph Office. Miles.	Cost of New Wire for connecting each Station, &c., with its nearest Telegraph Office, estimated at £30 per mile.	Annual Cost of maintenance of New Wire estimated at £1 per mile.
475	English	1,200	£36,000	£1,200
206	Irish	1,135	£34,050	£1,135
66	Scotch	65	£1,980	£65
747	Totals	2,400	£72,030	£2,400

Beyond the cost of Wire, as already intimated, there would be that for A B C Instruments, and supposing such to be decided on, say in round numbers, £100,000 as the first outlay, irrespective of the comparatively small amount of Wire necessary for connecting the Lifeboat, Lightship and Lighthouse Stations.

I may, perhaps, add a quotation from the diary of a Naval Correspondent, with Admiral Hewett's Squadron during the Jubilee manœuvres, as reported in *The Times* of 8th August, 1887.

"Portland,

"1st August.

"This morning we were off Portland with one piece only
"of useful information, that the enemy disappeared
"at eight last night 110 miles to the west of us.
"The question is, 'What will he do?' our communication with the Rame Head and Penlee Point
"is very uncertain, so that it is quite possible for
"the enemy to be off Plymouth at daylight, without
"having passed within 25 miles of either of our
"sources of information for that part, the Lizard or
"the Start (more accurately Prawle Point). I will
"not now speak of this defect of organization,
"beyond saying that the immense importance for the
"defence of our coast of joining all our principal Coastguard
"Stations, Lighthouses, &c., telegraphically is being made
"evident at every move we make. Suppose the enemy
"meditates taking Plymouth before making his

" attempt on the Thames, and gets there at four a.m.,
 " the defenders at Portland would not know it till
 " five or so; and if we then started off at full speed
 " we should have more than 70 miles, or between
 " seven and eight hours' steaming. From Portland,
 " therefore, we might do it, but if we moved on to
 " St. Catherine's Point, our next station eastward,
 " we should have 45 miles further to go, and Ply-
 " mouth must be lost. Next assume that instead of
 " Plymouth, he decides to make a dash for the
 " Thames at once, and being well out of sight of the
 " Lizard at about nine, he turns up channel from 40
 " miles south-east of the Lizard. He has about 240
 " miles to get to the Downs, and unless he can be
 " sighted and kept in sight during that 24 hours' run,
 " during all of which he may keep 40 miles off our
 " coast, until he nears the Downs, the defending
 " squadron has no chance of stopping him unless
 " it is a long way east of Portland, from whence to
 " the Downs is 160 miles. Even on a clear day no
 " signal station would discover him till he got off
 " Dungeness, when he would be 130 miles nearer
 " the Thames than Portland, and the defenders
 " consequently 13 hours behind, without allowing
 " any time for the message coming. It will be
 " obvious, therefore, that the defending Admiral
 " must decide without any data, or I should rather
 " say assume a certain course on the part of the
 " enemy; as he must leave either Plymouth or the
 " Downs, and so the Thames at his mercy. More
 " than this if it be assumed that Plymouth must
 " run its chance, there is still a risk in the defenders
 " going off at once to the Downs, for if they go as
 " far as Dungeness they are 130 miles from Portland
 " or outside the 10 hours' steaming; and if they go
 " as far as the Downs, they would be 110 miles from

" St. Catherine's Point, so that if the enemy found
 " he was discovered, or believed himself to be so
 " and the defenders had staked all upon his going
 " east for the Thames, he might, under favourable
 " circumstances, double back and take Portland, or
 " possibly even Portsmouth before the defending
 " squadron could get back."

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, whom I saw in December, expressed himself very strongly as to the imperative necessity for the measure; and I am most desirous that the Government should be pressed to adopt it while he is in office, as it is of course a great matter to have one of the Lords of the Admiralty entirely in sympathy with the proposal.

The Plymouth Chamber had, irrespective of my action, decided to bring the desirability of placing the Coastguard Stations and Lighthouses in Electric communication, under consideration, but not of the Associated Chambers, at the February Meeting, and are therefore in no way pledged to press for the adoption of the scheme in its entirety, though I feel most strongly that it should be so carried out; and that the working of all the signals, and wires (except the Lifeboat) should be in the hands of the Crown, so that the Admiralty may have their free use, and the Mercantile Marine their use at Inland Telegram rates, as near as may be, which would be a very great boon to the shipping interests; but will not be secured unless the signals, and wires are made public property.

The Admiral, Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, gave me to understand that the free use of the Lizard signals would be a matter of great convenience, and their frequent use in case of war an absolute necessity, though for a day message of 14 words Lloyd's charged him 6/-, so that except in cases of considerable importance the signals there are not used for Government purposes.

He and Admiral Grant both feel that it is of the greatest

importance that the Eddystone Lighthouse should be put in Electric communication with the shore, as a Ship Signal Station, in the hands of the Crown.

Looking at the immense national importance of the matter, both on the ground of humanity and defence; and further, that if all the wires and Ship Signals (except the Lifeboat) were worked by public servants, and the charges reduced to Inland telegraph rates, as nearly as practicable, the measure might probably prove financially a success; I trust I may rely on the matter receiving the very cordial co-operation of your Chamber.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

BATH,

FREDK. H. MABERLY.

January, 1888.

P.S.—About midnight on the 12th instant (while the foregoing was in course of printing), the German steamship "Nordstern" ran on the Pear Tree Rocks in a dense fog, about one mile to the westward of Start Point. In about a quarter-of-an-hour later her lights were seen from the Start Lighthouse, and the Hallsands coastguard officer made aware of the circumstances, but as the vessel was within the Prawle district, the Hallsands officer proceeded to find the man on patrol duty on that district, who being met made his way with all speed to that station, and the rocket apparatus was got out, and at three o'clock left for the scene of the wreck. Shortly after 4 o'clock the apparatus was opposite the Pear Tree Rock.

Intelligence of the casualty reached Salcombe about 8 o'clock on Friday, the 13th instant, from which telegrams could be sent to Plymouth and Dartmouth for steam-tugs. The Salcombe lifeboat crew were immediately got together, and launched their boat in half-an-hour, and when they arrived off Prawle Point, picked up the crew of the "Nordstern" in their boats, and learning that the vessel was then completely submerged, with the sea breaking right over her, returned to Salcombe just before 11 o'clock. Fortunately the "Nordstern" was not a passenger ship, or the loss of life would probably have been terrible. But the startling point brought out is that it should be possible for a ship to go on shore within a mile or so of one of our lighthouses, and within two or three of a *ship signal station*,* and though discovered within a quarter-of-an-hour after she struck, that the intimation of her position is between 2 and 3 hours in reaching the nearest means of help, and about 8 hours before it reaches the lifeboat station, all within 5 or 6 miles as the crow would fly. Does it not show the absolute necessity for either putting all our coast arrangements into the hands of the Crown, or that such an organization be established that all the departments concerned work as one in all matters affecting public interest?

The present state of things can only be looked on as a national disgrace.—*Vide The Western Morning News*, of 14th inst.

* Telegraphically not available between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.—
See page 17, par. 6.

The Committee of Lloyd's have established signal stations on the following points of the coast, viz.:—

All signals made by vessels to these stations (where in operation) are reported at once to the owners or others interested, on the terms stated on opposite leaf.

At the more important stations the Committee have arranged for taking the night signals of steamers, and for this purpose they will be glad if steamship companies will furnish to them a description of the night signals shown by their vessels. Ship-owners who require to have their vessels reported to them from signal stations are recommended to send in their applications direct to the Secretary of Lloyd's, London, E.C., and to state whether the vessels are to be reported on the homeward or outward passage, or on both, and also from what stations the vessels are to be reported.

Before orders can be signalled to vessels, it is necessary that the conditions under which the Committee of Lloyd's allow the use of the Corporation's Signal Stations for this purpose should be agreed to and signed by the senders. A copy of these conditions will be supplied on application to the Secretary of Lloyd's, to whom also should be sent all applications for such orders to be signalled.

*As Telegraphic Communication with this station has not yet been completed, ship-owners who wish to have their vessels telegraphed to them passing the Channel, are recommended to instruct their captains to report themselves at one or other of the stations to the east or west of Beachy Head.

As a rule Telegrams sent to Foreign addresses will be confined to the name of the vessel indicating that the vessel of the name given, has been identified off the station named in the heading of the Telegram, apparently all well.

If information be required from a Signal Station as to the force and direction of the wind and state of the weather, it can be given in a cipher, consisting of from three to five letters, as explained below:—

The first, second, or third letters in the cipher will denote direction of the wind—N., N.E., E.N.E., W., W.S.W., S.W., &c.

The last letter will give the state of the weather—*f*, fine; *c*, clear; *o*, overcast; *h*, hazy; *t*, thick or foggy.

Thus *W.S.W. m.f.* will mean *Wind West South West, moderate; Weather fine.*

STROYD'S SIGNAL SYSTEM IN A REF.

[illegible]

* Steamers of 2,000 tons and upwards when in ballast and bound from one United Kingdom Port to another are charged 26. Telegrams to United Kingdom addresses exceeding the limits of words allowed by the Post Office for the minimum charge, and Telegrams to Foreign addresses exceeding six words in length, including the name of the vessel, are charged 26. Telegrams to the Fleet, according to the number of words sent beyond these limits.

As a rule Telegrams sent to Foreign addresses will be confined to the name of the vessel, indicating that the vessel of the name given has been ordered to receive the message. Telegrams to the Fleet will be confined to the name of the vessel, indicating that the vessel of the name given has been ordered to receive the message.

The terms for signalling and reporting steamers of the Ocean Lines (English and Foreign), for which a special watch has to be kept, are subject to the same conditions as those for the other steamers.

Private messages signalled from vessels for the owners or as special messages for the commanding officer are signalled free of fee, for a message of twenty words or less, in addition to the cost of the telegram.

Yearly, half-yearly, quarterly or monthly accounts will be opened up for the owners who prefer such an arrangement to being for reports as they may require.

APPENDIX.—CONTINUED.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Lloyd's charges are such as to be what appears practically next to prohibitive to a large proportion of the mercantile marine, or at all events such as to render the use of telegraphic communication the exception instead of the rule, as it probably would be if available at inland rates, or nearly so, and beyond this the *hardly credible fact* is brought out that at only three points on the outer coast of the United Kingdom, namely at the Ship Signal Stations at Dover and the Lizard in England, and the Fastnet Rock, at the South-West extremity of Ireland are the telegraphic wires in connection with a night and day outlook to sea available for vessels in distress, or for warning of an approaching foe, &c., during the night hours. The Sunk Light Ship is in night and day electric connection with Harwich, Walton, and Ramsgate, and Hurst Castle with Southampton, but at all the other stations the look-out is only from daylight to dusk, and the wires as a rule are not available between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., and so far as the south coast of England is concerned, from the mouth of the Thames to the Land's End the only other places that can be communicated with by wire during those hours are Brighton, Plymouth, Falmouth, and Penzance, and on the entire remaining coasts of England, Scotland, and Wales, there are only nine other points at which wires are then available, so far as I am aware, and at those there is no sea outlook having any official or direct connection with them.

One would hesitate to make these facts known, were it not for the full belief that the present lamentable state of things will be immediately remedied.

Under the Mercantile Marine Fund there was received during the year 1884-5 (the last full statement printed) for light dues from shipping as under, viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
England - - - -	278,465	9	10
Ireland - - - -	13,944	9	3
Scotland - - - -	47,648	5	7
	£340,058	4	8
Ditto for Fees, &c., under the Merchant Shipping Acts	37,579	4	9
* Total ..	£377,637	9	5

* A direct (Annual) Tax upon the Mercantile Marine.

APPENDIX.—CONTINUED.

During the same time the *Expenditure* was for

Lighthouses.	Lightships.	For maintenance of Lighthouses, Lightships, Buoys, &c.	For New Works, Building Lighthouses, &c.
English 86	49	£ 228,672 6 0	£ 39,861 17 3
Irish 34	11	74,681 3 6	10,207 2 5
Scotch 62	1	49,661 1 3	25,670 16 4
182	61	£353,014 10 9	£75,739 16 0

For Expenses of Lifeboat Apparatus for Saving Lives on the Coast of the United Kingdom - £ 13,606 8 10
For Relief of Distressed British Seamen abroad, &c. - 28,957 0 0
Together £471,317 15s. 7d.

The total expenditure under the Mercantile Marine Fund for the year 1884-1885 was £617,113 4s. 10d., or £116,549 in excess of receipts from ordinary sources of income.

Considering the largeness of the expenditure involved it may be well to bring it together:—

The Naval Expenditure for 1886-1887, including the Coastguard Service -	£	s.	d.
National Lifeboat Voluntary Yearly Income (after the expenditure of £290,000 for Lifeboats, &c.,) is over -	-	13,988,381	0 0
Expended under the Mercantile Marine Fund, for the maintenance of Lighthouses, Lightships, &c., for 1884-1885 (of which £13,606 8s. 10d. was for Lifeboats, Apparatus for Saving Life, and Gratuities for Saving Lives on the Coasts of the United Kingdom) -	-	617,113	4 10
Annual Expenditure -	£14,655,494	4	10

Besides which, there is the cost of 430 Beacon Lights, provided at local expense, or otherwise along our coasts, and 30 Lifeboats locally provided and supported, of which I have no information as to the cost. A Life-saving Rocket Apparatus each is supplied at 294, and Belts and Lines at 380 stations around our coasts.

Through the instrumentality of the Coastguard Force and the National Lifeboat Institution during the thirty years ended June,

APPENDIX.—CONTINUED.

1887, the following number of lives have under God been saved around our coasts as shown by statement of the Board of Trade:—
By Rocket Apparatus and assisted with ropes, &c., from

the shore by the Coastguards	-	-	-	10,794
By Lifeboats	-	-	-	12,885
				<u>23,679</u>
By Luggers, Coastguard Boats, and Small Craft	-	-	-	13,152
By Ships and Steamboats	-	-	-	24,763
				<u>37,915</u>
				<u>61,594</u>

During the thirty years ending June, 1883,* 21,651 lives were lost in connection with wrecks around our coasts, or an average of 721 annually.

The average distance of the Lifeboats from each other on the South coast, between Weymouth and Penzance is 14 miles within a small fraction, evidently showing the necessity for communication with them by wire.

Telephonic is found to be much the best mode of communication through a cable with an offshore Lighthouse, or Lightship, and such mode would be the most desirable for the coastguard stations.

P.S.—While the foregoing was in the Printer's hands the North German Lloyd's Steamship "Werra," bound from Bremen to New York, ran aground at Dungeness in a thick fog with 600 passengers besides the crew on board, at 10.45 a.m., and was not got off until after midnight. A Steam-yacht bound down Channel was hailed to take telegrams for help, &c., to Hastings, 15 miles off, whereas had the proposed arrangement been in operation such could have been sent immediately at a great saving of time and mental agony, and had the "Werra" gone on shore in a gale instead of a fog the unnecessary delay that occurred in obtaining assistance would probably have resulted in fearful loss of life.

* Have not statistics for the years ending June, 1887.

**END OF
TITLE**